

On abnormally crossed mandibles in birds.—Among the kinds of manuscripts regularly appearing on the desks of editors of ornithological journals are those describing abnormalities of various types. Perhaps the favorite topic is variation in color; there appears to be a compulsion to place every albino or white-spotted bird on record. Readers of journals are less aware of this phenomenon than are editors and editorial committees, since relatively few of these notes are accepted for publication.

A close second to color abnormalities in popularity among aspiring authors seems to be bill deformities. Pomeroy (Brit. Birds, 55:49–72, 1962) published what must certainly come close to being the definitive paper on the subject of abnormal bills in birds, but, again, everyone who encounters a specimen of this type feels obliged to place it on record. Pomeroy (op. cit.:54) described “crossed mandibles” as “a relatively common abnormality which has been recorded in a wide range of species.” He cited five passerine species merely as examples, and figured crossed bills in the Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*) and the Great Tit (*P. major*).

A search through any large museum collection will yield specimens of species for which abnormally crossed mandibles have not been specifically recorded in the literature. Among 700 birds from northern Argentina in Carnegie Museum, collected in 1961 by the late William H. Partridge, Philip S. Humphrey, and the writer, are at least four cross-billed specimens: a Short-billed Canastero (*Asthenes baeri*), a Larklike Brush-runner (*Coryphistera alaudina*), a Field Flicker (*Colaptes campestris*), and a Plush-crested Jay (*Cyanocorax chrysops*), the latter two collected *on the same day*.

Any bird bander who regularly handles large numbers of birds will encounter individuals with abnormal bills, including crossed mandibles, almost every year. Such has certainly been our experience at our banding station at Powdermill Nature Reserve (near Rector, Pennsylvania); we note any such abnormality on our banding sheets and file cards, and release the birds routinely. Most of the reported birds with crossed bills (and those with other common abnormalities, such as extended and decurved upper mandibles), as well as those we have seen at Powdermill, have been adults, or at least full grown, and have thus obviously been able to feed in spite of their apparent handicaps.

I suggest that we take it as understood that these common bill abnormalities may occur in almost any avian species, and that there is little to be gained by devoting the valuable pages of our ornithological journals to descriptions and photographs of additional species. I except from my suggestion such thorough analyses as that of Threlfall (Auk, 85:506–508, 1968), with its careful anatomical description of an abnormal (and apparently non-viable) young Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*). I prefer not to cite any examples of papers on bill abnormalities that, in my opinion, were *not* worthy of publication.—KENNETH C. PARKES, *Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*, 4 September 1968.

PUBLICATION NOTES AND NOTICES

BIRDS OF PENNSYLVANIA: When and Where to Find Them. By Merrill Wood. Pennsylvania State University, Agricultural Experiment Station, University Park, [1967]: 4-3/8 × 8-1/2 in., paper covered, [xvi] + 119 pp., 156 drawings by Dorothy L. Bordner. \$1.00.

An introduction includes the topography of the area, migration seasons, and a calendar of birdlife. Pages 1–111 present a list of 423 species with brief remarks (when applicable) on frequency, abundance, seasonal occurrence, habits and status changes, and general breeding and wintering ranges.